

Claims

1. A method of payment for audio content received by an Internet radio device wherein:

content is requested by a user of the device;

the requested content is included into a process of message assembly where the content is divided into portions, and a value is established for each portion of the content;

a payment message is attached to each portion of the content, the payment message representing a value at least equal to the value of each respective portion of content;

the payment message being at least one of an advertising message and a fee message;

the payment message and attached portion of content comprising an assembled message, a plurality of assembled messages being sent sequentially to the device;

a sequence of at least the portions of content being made audible to the user by the device;

a user account records a cost for a total value of the portions of content that are delivered.

2. The method of payment of claim 1 wherein the payment message is an advertising message, and the advertising message is made audible by the device.

3. The method of payment of claim 2 wherein the user receives a quantity of advertising that is in proportion to the quantity of content that is delivered to the device.

4. The method of payment of claim 1 wherein the user elects to receive advertising, the value of the user account decreases as content is delivered, value is added to the user account as each advertising message is received by the device, and the user receives advertising messages accompanying the content until the value of the user account increases to a predetermined value.

5. The method of payment of claim 1 wherein the user elects to pay a subscription fee to be entitled to receive content for a predetermined period of time, and the value of the user account increases by the amount of the fee near a time the fee is received by a service provider.

6. The method of payment of claim 5 wherein the value of content delivered to the user during the predetermined period of time exceeds a value of the subscription fee, the value of the user account decreases to below a predetermined value, and the user receives advertising messages accompanying the content until the value of the user account rises above the predetermined value.

7. The method of payment of claim 1 wherein the device includes a selecting element that determines a type of payment message that is attached to the portions of content.

8. The method of payment of claim 7 wherein the selecting element operates substantially concurrently with the delivery of content, and the user elects to incur an obligation to pay a fee in lieu of having an advertising message attached to a subsequently delivered assembled message.

9. The method of payment of claim 7 wherein the selecting element operates substantially concurrently with the delivery of content, and the user elects to receive an advertising message in lieu of incurring an obligation to pay a fee.

10. The method of payment of claim 5 wherein the fee message includes an instruction to delete an advertising message from an assembled message.

11. A method of payment for audio content received by an Internet radio device wherein:

the content is delivered by a service provider to the device;

the device includes a selecting element which determines a type of payment that is used to pay for content that is delivered to the device;

the type of payment includes at least one of advertising accompanying the content, and a fee paid to the service provider;

the selecting element operates concurrently with the delivery of content whereby the user is enabled to select the type of payment to be used for content that is delivered after the selecting element is operated.

12. The method of payment of claim 11 wherein both of advertising and a fee are used to pay for content, and the selecting element determines a relative ratio to be used for these respective types of payment.

13. The method of payment of claim 11 wherein the content is requested by a user of the device and included into a process of message assembly where the content is divided into portions, and a value is established for each portion of the content;

a payment message is attached to each portion of the content, the payment message being at least one of an advertising message and a fee message;

the payment message and attached portion of content comprising an assembled message, a plurality of assembled messages being sent sequentially to the device;

a sequence of at least the portions of content being made audible to the user by the device;

a user account records a cost for a total value of the portions of content that are delivered;

the selecting element determining which type of payment message is attached to each portion of content.

14. A method of payment for audio content received by an Internet radio device wherein:

the content is delivered by a service provider to the device;

the device includes a selecting element which determines a type of payment that is used to pay for content that is delivered to the device;

the type of payment includes at least one of advertising accompanying the content, and a fee paid to the service provider;

the delivered content is included into a process of message assembly where the content is divided into portions, and a value is established for each portion of the content;

a payment message is attached to each portion of the content, the payment message being at least one of an advertising message and a fee message;

the payment message and attached portion of content comprising an assembled message, a plurality of assembled messages being sent sequentially to the device;

a sequence of at least the portions of content being made audible to the user by the device;

a user account records a cost for a value of the portions of content that are delivered;

the selecting element determining which type of payment message is attached to each portion of content.

15. The method of payment of claim 14 wherein both of advertising and a fee are used to pay for content, and the selecting element sets a relative ratio to determine a frequency by which each of these respective types of payment are attached to the portions of content.

16. The method of payment of claim 14 wherein the fee message includes an instruction to delete an advertising message from an assembled message.

17. The method of payment of claim 14 wherein the service provider informs the user account of the value of content that is delivered.

18. The method of payment of claim 14 wherein the service provider invoices the user account for a cost of content upon receipt of the request for content, and the user account causes one of a corresponding ad message or fee message to be sent to the process of message assembly.

19. The method of payment of claim 14 wherein the assembled messages include advertising messages, a value of the user account increases as advertising messages are delivered, and the advertising messages are included in the assembled messages until the user account has increased to a predetermined value.

20. The method of payment of claim 14 wherein the type of payment is determined by the service provider when the user account has decreased to a predetermined value.